

Project GCP/INT/945/ITA
"Information Products for Nile Basin Water Resources Management"

MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE
(Entebbe, 26-27 November 2008)

1. Opening Ceremony

The meeting convened at the Lake Victoria Hotel, Entebbe, Uganda.

On behalf of Mr. David Obong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment for Uganda, Eng. Richard Cong, Acting Director, Directorate of Water Development, welcomed the delegates in Uganda and delivered an opening statement. Mr. Sergio Regi of the Italian Cooperation Office of the Italian Embassy in Uganda delivered a statement on behalf of the Government of Italy. Mr. Percy W. Misika, FAO Representative in Uganda, presented a statement on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The statements are attached as Annex A.

Representatives of all participating countries were present. The meeting was also attended by delegations of the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat and FAO, and the project evaluation consultants. The list of participants is attached as Annex B.

2. Appointment of Chairperson and Rapporteur, and Adoption of the Agenda

Eng. Nebert Wobusobozi, Second PSC Member for Uganda, was appointed as Chairperson while the rapporteur was provided by the project.

The draft agenda was considered and approved. The adopted agenda is attached as Annex C.

3. Matters Arising from PSC4

The CTA briefed the meeting on the actions taken on the specific issues raised by PSC4, as presented in Annex D.

The meeting reported on the actions taken to contact their Ministers, TAC members, and other relevant officers on the continued relevance of the project. It was reported that letters were sent by two member countries to FAO HQ and the Donor to request an extension of the project.

4. Project Overview and Products

The CTA presented an overview of project setup and outputs. He reviewed the development objectives, which were focused on: 1) contributing to the common knowledge base in the Nile Basin, and 2) strengthening government capacity.

The first cluster of outputs (hydro-meteorological monitoring, database development, Nile-DST, and GIS Info Products) built directly on the results of the previous projects. They are mostly completed. The second output cluster was geared towards assessing the relation between water and agriculture at Nile basin scale. Good progress was made. The study resulted in a much improved understanding of the

current status of agriculture in the Nile basin. It also produced a comprehensive analysis of the agricultural demand function in the Nile basin for 2030.

The analysis stopped short of exploring basin wide agricultural development options. Thinking shifted from a desk study towards a much more elaborate multi-stakeholder process, which would require resources beyond the project means.

The CTA highlighted the usefulness of the information products to serve as backdrop to a facilitated dialogue examining relevant policy questions in a multi-stakeholder process.

An example illustrated how the project information products contributed to identifying common ground with regard to agricultural trade among the Nile countries.

The meeting discussed the subject and noted the progress made in the reporting period. It emphasized the importance of project output 2.5 "Exploring basin wide agricultural development options".

5. Project Outputs

5.1 Hydro-meteorological Monitoring

Mr. Peterson Njiru, NC Kenya, highlighted the accomplishments of the hydro-meteorological monitoring component.

He discussed the reasons for the gradual decline in hydrometric monitoring in the basin. A strategy for sustainable data acquisition was proposed based on reducing operating expenses. To this effect, modern electronic equipment was introduced and counterpart staff trained. A limited number of stations were established.

In an additional activity the project developed a methodology for flow measurement under high sediment conditions with the Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler.

5.2 Nile Decision Support Tool

Mr. Vincent Ssebuggwawo presented a case study demonstrating how the Nile Decision Support Tool (Nile DST) can support informed policy and decision making in the Nile Basin.

The Nile-DST was handed over to the SVP Water Resources Planning and Management Project during the regional training workshop in Addis Ababa in September 2007, marking the end of the Nile-DST activities of FAO Nile.

5.3 Database Development

The CTA presented an overview of the outputs of the database development component.

He emphasized that FAO Nile had engaged in a substantial database development exercise. This included hydro-meteorological time series, agricultural production statistics, and geo-referenced irrigation information. Basin-wide data were collected, organized, verified, and stored in electronic format.

The CTA shared his experience that database development is routinely underestimated and requires far more time than originally anticipated. Data quality and availability varies as a function of monitoring practices and national hosting arrangements.

5.4 GIS Info Products

A presentation highlighted how the project's poster set aimed to support the public policy process in the Nile Basin by making relevant existing information better accessible. The CTA emphasized that the poster series carry additional value when used as backdrop for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue to examine relevant policy questions.

Developing the posters built directly on the GIS capacity established in the Nile countries. The activity also supported the GIS capacity building effort by the project.

The meeting recommended including the poster series and a relevant description in the project synthesis report.

5.5 Capacity Building Component

The CTA presented an overview of the capacity building program of FAO Nile. In line with NBI policies, most project team members and national consultants were recruited from the Nile riparians and skills acquired during project implementation have been retained in the region.

The second component of the capacity building program comprised of 59 training events to which a total of 562 trainees participated aimed to strengthen government capacity at national level to manage scarce water resources. The program covered a broad scope ranging from hydro-meteorology, GIS, IT skills to negotiation skills training.

The meeting noted the progress made.

5.6 Agricultural Water Use Survey

Mr. Jacob Burke, Senior Policy Officer at FAO, presented the results of the agricultural water use survey. He explained that the database setup facilitated cross-checking with FAOSTAT and AQUASTAT. Data quality control is ongoing in particular with regard to cropping calendar and cropping intensities.

The results of the land cover to land use exercise allowed for a better appreciation of water demand in both rainfed and irrigated agriculture.

The ensuing discussions focused on horizontal expansion versus intensification.

5.7 Agricultural Productivity

Dr. Tadesse Kibreab, Agricultural Productivity Consultant, presented the preliminary results of the agricultural productivity study. He discussed the rationale for the farming system approach and explained the concept of typologies. It was observed

that the implementation schedule was over ambitious for a basin wide study of this magnitude and scope.

At the time of reporting, six country reports were completed while two have been submitted in draft format. A wealth of information on the agricultural systems of the Nile basin has been received and organized in a database. A synthesis report is in preparation.

Dr. Kibreab recommended that the national survey teams would review the synthesis report prior to its publication.

The meeting noted the progress made and stressed the importance of completing the analysis.

5.8 "Food for Thought" Scenario Exercise

The CTA reported on the results of the "Food for Thought" (F4T) scenario exercise and how it could assist in strengthening Nile cooperation.

A detailed presentation was made on the progress and status of "Food for Thought". It emphasized the participatory scenario development process and demonstrated how F4T could support a policy development process.

The meeting noted the progress made and indicated a need to disseminate the results to a much broader audience.

6. Distribution of Data Sets and Project Outputs

The meeting discussed the modalities for distributing data sets and products prepared by the project. It decided:

- FAO would serve as custodian of the basic data sets;
- No data will be distributed without permission of the countries;
- The country delegations will consult at national level what data can be distributed to the public domain and under which conditions, and inform FAO accordingly;
- FAO will continue checking and verifying the datasets;
- NBI procedures regarding data and information sharing will be followed once in place;
- Derivative project products can be distributed to the public domain.

7. Preliminary Results Project Evaluation

Messrs. Patrick Kahangire and George Sarpong – project evaluation consultants - presented the preliminary results of the terminal evaluation of the project.

Its purpose was to assess the effectiveness of project implementation, appreciate the relevance of project outputs, and to provide recommendations to the Participating Governments, FAO and the Donor on the further steps necessary to consolidate progress and ensure achievement of objectives.

The overall evaluation confirmed the relevance of the project and indicated that the quality of the outputs was good.

The consultants made recommendations with regard to the dissemination and internalization of the project outputs and how to integrate project work into the NBI activities. To accomplish this work, they recommended an 18-month extension, depending on the availability of further donor funding. In the event that these funds are not forthcoming, FAO should work closely with NBI to transfer ownership of the project outputs to the NBI process.

The preliminary evaluation report is attached as Annex E.

8. Lessons Learnt

The meeting discussed lessons learnt. They included:

- to better internalize project outputs, it is advised to strengthen the national project components and involve larger teams of national counterparts;
- closer follow-up by the PSC is required and the PSC should meet more frequently than once per year;
- the project should agree upon a formal reporting requirement to the NBI in order to better integrate project activities in the NBI.

9. Briefing on Nile Basin Initiative Activities

On behalf of the Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat (Nile SEC), Mr. John Ogwang, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the NBI, briefed the meeting on the setup and recent developments of the NBI Program. Special attention was given to the status and objectives of the Institutional Strengthening Project and the NELSAP Regional Agricultural Trade Project.

The meeting discussed the avenues through which the outputs from FAO Nile could be taken up by NBI.

10. Recommended Follow-up

A presentation indicated recommended areas for follow-up. The meeting discussed how components of the Nile Basin Initiative could build on the work accomplished by the project. The PSC agreed to extend the project with six months at no additional funding with the aim to:

- finalize outstanding activities in particular with regard to the agricultural water use survey and farming system analysis;
- open a dialogue with the NBI Secretariat on how to integrate project outputs into the various NBI components, and develop a joint dissemination strategy;
- organize high level national workshops in each project country to disseminate project outputs;
- provide an opportunity for the steering committee members to contact their Ministers, TAC members, and other relevant officers, on the relevance of the project and request to inform the Italian Cooperation accordingly.

11. Any Other Business

The meeting recommended that clear communication is required to the countries – in particular the TAC members – regarding the sustainability aspects that will occur after the six-month no-cost extension of the project.

No further issues were raised.

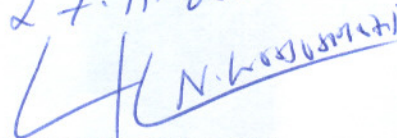
12. Adoption of the Minutes and Closure of the Meeting

The minutes were presented, discussed in detail, and adopted. The Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

Participating countries


.....Date

27.11.2008

 N. Wobusobozi

Eng. Nebert Wobusobozi, Chairperson of the PSC

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

 P. Steduto Date 27/11/08

Mr. P. Steduto, Chief NRLW